173 582 must not be confounded with the town of Dibra, and of which I have no information. Both these two bairaks can marry the former three.

173 166 I was told by members of the groups that the Mirdite-Shala-Shoshi came from the Pestriku mountains, near Djakova, when the Turks were first pressing westward. Before this emigration they had formed part of the Ipek group of tribes and were all Christian. (There is some reason to believe that at one time the Mirdites were Orthodox.) They further stated that when the Turks took Scutari and were harrying the land they fled back for a time to their old Pestriku mountains, and only returned to their present position some 259 years ago. The name "Mirdite" is of late occurrence—about the middle of the seventeenth century. It is possible that before their second shifting they were known only as Dukagini. Of Lek Dukagin they are extremely proud, and state that the Bijelopavlitchi (sons of White Paul) in Montenegro are de- 292 765 scended from his nephew, Pal i bardhe (Paul the White). They declared Skender Beg to have been related to him, and for this reason the Mirdite women wear the black giurdan in mourning for him, worn otherwise only by men.

614 582 These three bairaks, Orosho, Spachi, and Kusneni, marry principally with Kthela and Luria.

KTHELA

701 614 619 In war Kthela marches with Mirdita. These two had the right to lead the tribes to all wars in the South. Hoti led to all wars in the North. Kthela consists of three bairaks: Kthela, all Catholic; Selati and Perlati, mixed Catholic and Moslem.

4. The Wholly Moslem Tribes

619 779 186 These lie for the most part east of the Christian groups, on the more fertile and lower-lying lands. They were reluctant to admit foreigners and averse to being questioned. Since I visited them they have been largely exterminated by the Serbs and Montenegrins, and how much is left of their former strength and number is unknown.

DIBRA GROUP

619 614 779 582 1. *Luria.*—Was the head of the group and consisted of one bairak of some two hundred houses, in twenty of which there were some Catholics. In 1908 Mohammedanism was making rapid progress. When Christian, which it was till recently, it married as a rule with

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGI Albania EGI

THE FIGHTING MEN FROM THE MOUNTAINS WHO CAME INTO TIRANA TO DEFEND THE GOVERNMENT WHILE ELEZ JUBUF WAS IN TIRANA

In this group are men from seven tribes, distinguishable by the pattern of their trousers.

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7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

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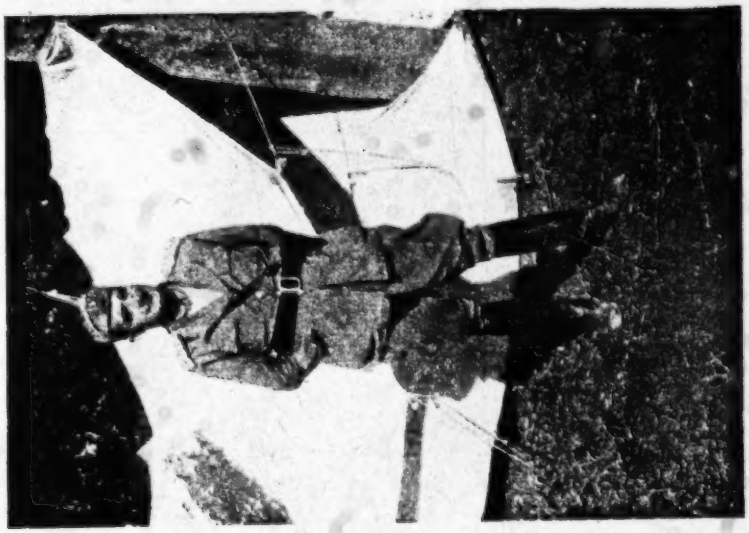

GENERAL PRENK PREVISI,
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ALBANIAN ARMY

622

IHSAN BEY TOPTANI

[-244a-]

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

VI

WAR ON TWO FRONTS

> The instant ruin of his country may redound to the hero's glory; yet had he balanced the consequences of submission and resistance, a patriot perhaps would have declined the unequal contest which must depend on the life and genius of one man. Scanderberg might indeed be supported by the rational, though fallacious, hope, that the Pope, the King of Naples and the Venetian Republic would join in the defence of a free and Christian people who guarded the sea coast of the Adriatic and the narrow passage from Greece to Italy.
>
> GIBBON: *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, (Chapter LXVII)

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THE affairs of the Albanian Nationalists drew swiftly on towards their crisis. On the 18th August Fikri Dine and General Prenk Previsi, the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, drove out from Tirana and were conducted to Abas Kupi's headquarters. It was only a few days since Fikri had cut off the funds and food supplies of the Zogists in a last attempt to compel Abas Kupi's submission to his government. Now he and the General were come almost as suppliants to confess their failure to obtain arms or money from the Germans and their conviction that there was nothing more to be hoped for from a policy of "collaboration". They had played the German card against the Partisans and lost. Now they turned naturally to Abas Kupi to sound him as to his hopes of British support and to learn whether they might still save their skins by rallying to his cause.

This was the moment for which Abas Kupi had been waiting through all the years of his struggle in the mountains. In his eyes the creation of a resistance movement and the search for an agreement with the Allied Mission had been but

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preparations for the day when he could call all Albanians to a general revolt against an enemy too weak ever to regain the initiative. Then, but only then, the military advantage would lie with the insurgents, and the ravages of war would be redeemed by the fruits of victory: power for the leaders and loot for the rank and file. Once before, at the time of the collapse of Italy, he had believed that the time had come and had thrown all his forces into a general revolt. Then, if events had favoured the guerillas, he might have been the arbiter of Albania's destinies, for he had been strong in his own following and had held the balance of power between the Ballists and the Partisans. In those days he had meant to give the "collaborationists" short shrift; but since then the civil war had taken a heavy toll of his strength, and he was now in no position to reject reinforcements from whatever quarter they might come. Fikri and his friends still represented a force to be reckoned with, and, in the eyes of many, their "collaboration" had been all but justified by the fear of Communism which had inspired it. Besides, once they had joined him in the mountains, they would be in his power, and he would be the master. With their support he would make good the losses of the civil war and might hope to do great execution among the retreating Germans. Thereafter the British could no longer refuse him their help, and he would thus be strong enough to compel Enver Hoja to come to terms.

Abas Kupi therefore proposed to his two visitors that the leaders of the Government and of the Balli Kombetar should leave Tirana with all their forces and join him in the mountains to attack the Germans. If they complied he would give them his protection and allocate to them a share of such supplies as he might receive from the British. If they refused he would still take the field alone, but would then regard them as his enemies. All afternoon the three debated this proposal and the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief saw little alternative but to accept. Bitter experience, however, had taught them to distrust the friendship of Great Powers, and, before committing themselves to the precarious refuge of the mountains, they wanted to be sure that Abas Kupi's hopes of

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

British support were more likely of fulfilment than those which they had once founded upon the Germans. They asked, therefore, for assurances that the British command would support their operations with military supplies, and would view their defection to the Allied cause with favour. If the Agha could obtain such assurances from the British Mission they would accept his proposal, and he might count on them as on his own men.

As soon as Fikri and the General were gone, Abas Kupi despatched a messenger to summon us to an urgent meeting. Accordingly we set out in Ihsan's carriage on the following evening, and, driving through the night along dusty cart tracks, reached the lonely farm-house where the Agha slept. The hour was too late for discussions, but next morning we went out together to a cool and shaded apple orchard where the master of the house had spread bright-coloured rugs for our conference. There Abas Kupi told us of his meeting with the "collaborationist" leaders and declared himself ready, despite the civil war, to attack the Germans as soon as we should give the assurances which Fikri had required. His proposal corresponded closely to our own most sanguine expectations, but we heard him with affected reserve; for we could not tell what would be the reactions of the staff officers in Bari. We saw, however, that the Agha himself was excited by the prospect of action, and to allay his impatience at once drew up a report for our Headquarters which was enciphered and transmitted in his presence. In this we admitted that British encouragement for the projected concentration of Nationalists under Abas Kupi's command might feed fuel to the flames of civil war. At the same time we were sure that it would contribute to the discomfiture of the Germans, who might otherwise make good their retreat through North Albania with little loss. We also pointed out that the entry of the Nationalists into the war against Germany would provide us with a last opportunity for intervening to stop the civil war and to prevent the incorporation of Albania in the Soviet system.

When our business was done and we had eaten we left the orchard and went our several ways: Abas Kupi to Kurbenesh to negotiate alliances with its chiefs; Ihsan to Tirana to keep

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

to attack the Germans. Meanwhile, leaving Maclean and myself at Topise, Smiley set out with Zogist guides to reconnoitre the approaches to Durazzo.

That night, when we had gone, Fikri Dine, General Prenk Previsi, and representatives of the Balli Kombetar drove out from Tirana to the Agha's headquarters to learn of our reply. Their discussions lasted through the night, but before dawn the die was cast. They returned to the capital, and, at noon on the 29th August, Fikri Dine announced the resignation of his government in a proclamation which declared that his efforts to save Albania from Communism had been frustrated by the total absence of German support.

The resignation of the government was the signal for the political leaders to disperse, and completed the isolation of the Germans. They sought to persuade, and at length to compel, the loyalty of their former associates, but when they struck the birds had already flown. Fikri Dine made his way to Dibra, hoping to raise the tribes to his support, but the Partisans were already masters of the region, and the chiefs who had been his friends had gone over to the winning side. For some days he wandered as an outlaw through the lands he had once swayed; but his utmost efforts only rallied to his cause some two hundred men, the remnants of the Dibran gendarmerie. With these he then retired through Mirdita to the Catholic region of Kurbenesh, which lies to the west of Mati. Kurbenesh was the seat of Prenk Previsi's influence, and there Fikri found the general with a body of picked officers and men of the Albanian army. Their combined following was less than five hundred strong — all that remained of the Albanian armed forces.

The Ballist leaders meanwhile hesitated to entrust themselves to the Gheg chieftains and went into hiding near, or even in, Tirana, to wait until their forces should arrive from the South. Midhat Frasheri and Ali Klissura were variously reported held or shot by the Germans, but when the smoke of rumour cleared it was found that they were in Shiyak. There Abas Ermenye, the movement's energetic military commander, was concentrating the remnants of the Ballist forces, which presently amounted to some eight hundred men.

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

000 son had been killed in the R.A.F. raid on Petch. The tradition of hospitality, however, proved stronger than a father's resentment; he feasted us on sucking pig and grapes, and placed his house at our disposal. There, in the evening, we were joined 643 by Abas Kupi, who came with Fikri Dine and the leaders of the Balli Kombetar.

Fikri was stocky and dark, with grey, rather lifeless eyes and a greedy mouth. He looked tough; his speech was blunt; his manner arrogant. He was not, however, without subtlety, and we found him possessed of a distinct sense of humour. The first encounter with British officers must have been embarrassing, for a former " collaborationist " premier, but, to our great relief, Fikri sought neither to explain nor to excuse his conduct. Instead he told us the history of his attempts to procure arms and money from the Germans, and, with disarming frankness and a touch of irony, described the causes of his failure. He had tried to exploit them for his own ends, and his only regret was that his intrigues had been foiled. There is an element of exploitation in all politics, and Fikri's rage at being made himself the dupe was so sincere that it could not but compel a certain professional sympathy. When he had done with the past he questioned me anxiously about British policy towards Albania, and his own verdict was not perhaps mistaken.

" I know," he said, " that you English have an interest in our country because we have a sea coast and you are a sea power. Many of us count on that, but I have learnt from bitter experience that in politics little interests are often sacrificed to greater ones."

• 701 With Fikri came General Prenk Previsi, the Commander-in-Chief of the Albanian army and the paramount influence in Kurbenesh. He was a dark, rather weak-faced man, and wore a blue-green field uniform with red facings and highly polished riding-boots. We thought him a light-opera general, but as yet he took little part in proceedings and remained in the background, surrounded by a group of down-at-heel staff officers.

665 In Malibardhe we also met for the first time Ali Bey Klissura, who stood second only to Midhat Frasheri in the Balli Kombetar. A powerful landowner from the south, Ali

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

VII

DEFEAT IN VICTORY

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> I believed I was on the right road. . . . But fate was merciless to me when it threw me into this maelstrom. I wanted much, I started much, but the gale of the world carried away me and my work.
>
> GENERAL DRAJA MIHAILOVITCH: *Final speech at his trial in Belgrade, 11th July, 1946*

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186 Now when Abas Kupi saw that all was lost, he wasted no time in vain regrets or feeble reproaches but manfully resolved to bring his affairs to an honourable conclusion. Pride and resentment might still incline him to join with Muharrem Bairaktar and the Captain of Mirdita to wage a forlorn guerilla against the Partisans, but he had been four years the ally of the British, and loyalty, as well as judgment, forbade him to prolong a struggle which we had condemned. He decided, therefore, as a patriot to spare his countrymen from further useless bloodshed, and, like a prudent man, prepared to make good his own escape. That same afternoon he marched out towards Preza to bid his confederate chiefs farewell and to disband the Zogist forces to their homes. Thereafter he would only maintain a bodyguard, and, having discharged his last duties towards his followers, would return and seek our help to leave Albania and join his king.

• 701 In the Agha's absence we were committed to the care of General Prenk Previsi, the former "collaborationist" Commander-in-Chief. We rode north-eastwards, therefore, from Malibardhe, and, after a two hours' journey through rolling, wooded country, came on his headquarters, a lonely, stone

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

house deep in the forest of Skurrai. Sentries were posted along the paths leading to it, and, warned by them of our approach, the General came out to meet us surrounded by his staff. We exchanged formal salutes and, standing in the rain, endured a speech of welcome. The Albanian officers were then marshalled in a row for presentation, while the General explained with the ostentatious precision of an instructor on a tactical exercise the dispositions which he had taken for our defence. Such military proceedings astonished the guerillas, but, determined not to be outdone, we gratified the General's vanity and our own sense of humour by inviting him to inspect our Turkoman troops.

Prenk Previsi had until recently been our enemy, but, as is often the way of defeated generals in their dealings with the winning side, he now sought to establish a bond of professional sympathy between us as brother officers. As a first step to this end he proposed, in accordance with what he doubtless believed to be British military custom, that we divide our party into officers and men. It was hard to say, however, who were the officers among the guerillas; and we had grown accustomed, after the manner of the tribal chiefs, to a changing entourage of Zogist and Ballist delegates, favourites, interpreters, buffoons, and bodyguards, who followed us wherever we went. We declined, therefore, to attempt a distinction which must have been invidious, and, among proud men, might have been imprudent. For a moment we feared a social crisis, but on a sudden inspiration I suggested to the General that our motley retinue might be classified as our *État-major*. Maclean bit his lip not to laugh, but honour was satisfied by this ridiculous formula; for, despite his rank and military pretensions, Prenk Previsi was, as I had surmised, but a tribesman in uniform.

We now repaired together towards the house, a solid, two-storied building set on the edge of a low cliff and fronted with a trellis-work portico overgrown with vines. A round arch surmounted by an engraved cross marked the doorway and, passing under it, we were conducted up a steep flight of steps to the guest-room. A log fire blazed on the hearth, but,

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

instead of the usual carpets and cushions, the floor on both sides of the room was piled three feet deep with banks of fresh bracken.

Our host and protector, General Prenk Previsi, had played an important part in the revolution of 1924, and, with Muharrem Bairaktar, Fikri Dine, and Jemal Herri, had formed the quadrumvirate by whose efforts Zog's regime had been established among the Ghegs. When he had served the royal purpose Zog had deprived him of his command and had promoted him to an appointment on the General Staff, where he had enjoyed honour without exercising influence. More pliable than his fellow quadrumvirs, Prenk Previsi had laid aside his political ambitions and had devoted an unusual talent for intrigue to his advancement in the military career. He had won the favour of General Pariani, the head of the Italian Military Mission, and had been chosen by him to accompany the Italian armies in the Abyssinian War as Albanian observer. On his return he had been appointed Albanian Military Attaché in Rome, and his subsequent submission to the Italian crown had been rewarded with the rank of General. The Italians had given him a command during the Greek campaign, but he had been suspected of correspondence with the enemy and had been transferred to Scutari as Albanian adviser to the Italian Commandant. He had employed the next two years in building up a faction among the Albanian officers, but had stood aside from the general revolt against the Italians, retiring with his chief supporters to his native district of Kurbenesh. There he had remained until, in November 1943, the Council of Regency set up under the Germans had summoned him to the Supreme Command.

His career as Commander-in-Chief had been stormy; for, while it was German policy to divide and rule, Prenk Previsi was determined to keep all the Albanian armed forces under his own command. His struggle with the Germans was necessarily unequal, but he emerged triumphant from their first challenge to his authority. The Germans had decided to raise an Albanian S.S. Division for the German army, and had offered command of the first brigade to a certain Salami

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

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Chelai. This Chelai was a Captain on the Reserve, and as such came under the jurisdiction of Prenk Previsi. Now the General was naturally opposed to the formation of an Albanian unit which would not be subject to his authority, and had therefore ordered Chelai to decline the appointment. On German advice, however, Chelai disregarded this order; and one morning the General observed him entering the German Corps Headquarters, dressed in Colonel's uniform. Injured in his dignity, he resolved "to make an example" and ordered Chelai's immediate "execution". An hour later, as the wretched man emerged from his conference, the General's A.D.C.s and orderlies despatched him on the steps of the German Headquarters with two hand-grenades and a volley from their submachine-guns. The General himself enjoyed the proceedings from his office window; and a large crowd gathered to demonstrate their approval. The Germans were not unnaturally enraged by such high-handed defiance, and demanded Prenk Previsi's instant dismissal and punishment. The old Regent, Mehdi Bey, however, had learnt his politics under the Ottoman Empire, and, summoning the General in the presence of the German Commanding Officer, said to him:

"I must ask you to apologise to our German friend for the mess your men have made on his doorstep. Next time you have to shoot an officer, see that it is done in a barracks and not in the street."

The German took the hint; an S.S. division was later formed in the Kossovo, but the attempt was never repeated within the frontiers of the old kingdom.

Prenk Previsi survived the incident, but his relations with the Germans were permanently impaired. His requests for arms and ammunition for the Albanian army were thenceforth invariably rejected; and a letter which he had addressed to General Fistun on this subject was returned to him like a schoolboy's unsatisfactory exercise with "Nein" scrawled across the top of it in green ink. It was this slight which had finally decided him to turn against the Germans, and, now that he was with their enemies, he unburdened himself of all his pent-up resentment. The account of his "collaboration"

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

was scarcely creditable to himself, but it was eloquent of the almost pathological incapacity of the Germans to win the sympathies of those who might so easily have been their friends.

We came to know Prenk Previsi well in the next few weeks, and, though experience only confirmed our first estimate of his vain and vacillating temper, we found him a good fellow and at times an interesting companion. In his cups he liked nothing better than to be called "Pasha" by his officers, but his observations on affairs were often shrewd, and once he inadvertently revealed to us the secret of oriental government. Our food had been falling off in quality, and, in the hope of improvement, we tried in turn an Italian, a Russian, and a Turkoman cook. The General shared our meals, and we accordingly asked his opinion as to which of these cooks we should keep.

"Use all three," he answered, "but stir up jealousy between them and let each one fear that you think to dismiss him. Then we shall eat well."

We tested his advice and were obliged to confess that it was sound.

We remained a week in Skurrai, watching the summer fade out of the year. The leaves were already turning in the forest; and almost every day there were showers of rain. The evenings set in colder; and the General now had a fire lit in front of the house so that we might enjoy the last hours of daylight in its warmth. We passed the time in anecdote and speculation, and I began to take lessons in Italian from Mario and Franco. Sometimes Mario would sing for us, or we would call on the Turkomans to dance. Ihsan Toptani joined us on the 25th September with the news that one of his servants had been arrested by the Partisans while bringing back to us the spare charging-engine for our wireless. The Partisans had kept the engine, and had beaten the boy so hard to learn of our whereabouts that a week later he was still unfit for work. Merret also arrived from the south with Sergeant Jones, and reported that the Germans were retiring northward unhindered, while Zogists and Partisans still wasted their strength in civil war.

and his assistants are appointed by the People's Convention. 693
District attorneys of the prefectures and subprefectures [646]
are appointed by the Attorney General.

ARTICLE 86

All district attorneys are independent of the local governmental units and are responsible only to the Attorney General, from whom they receive orders and instructions.

ARTICLE 87

District attorneys are authorized to initiate penal actions [692]
and also to exercise the right of appeal as well as the right to intervene during a judicial or administrative trial. District attorneys can exercise the right of appeal against summary decisions of the courts and other administrative organs when such decisions are illegal.

ARTICLE 88

The district attorney of the military courts of the national [701]
army of the People's Republic of Albania and other military attorneys are appointed by the Commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the Republic.

TITLE V

Relation Between the Executive and Administrative Departments

ARTICLE 89

The Presidium of the People's Convention may annul or 642
suspend decrees, instructions, and decisions of the government when they are unconstitutional and illegal.

The government may annul or suspend decrees, ordinances, instructions and decisions of ministers when they are contrary to the laws, decrees, instructions and decisions of the government.

ARTICLE 90

The Presidium of the People's Convention and the higher 643
people's councils may suspend any illegal or irregular act of 631
the lower people's councils.

[Constitution]

643 The government or the ministers may annul or suspend
631 any illegal or irregular act of the executive committees. The higher executive committees have the same right over the lower executive committees.

The people's councils may annul or suspend any illegal or irregular act of their own executive committees.

The government and the executive committees of the higher people's councils may suspend the execution of every illegal or irregular act of the lower people's councils or may propose the annulment of such acts.

ARTICLE 91

The Presidium of the People's Convention and the higher people's councils may dissolve the lower people's councils and authorize new elections. Likewise they may suspend executive committees of the lower people's councils and order elections of new executive committees.

TITLE VI

The National Army

ARTICLE 92

701 The National Army is the armed force of the People's Republic of Albania. Its duty is to defend the independence of the state and the freedom of the people.

The army defends the frontiers of the state and guarantees internal peace and security.

ARTICLE 93

The Supreme Commander of the armed forces of the People's Republic of Albania is appointed by the People's Convention.

The Supreme Commander directs all the armed forces of the People's Republic of Albania.

PART THREE

The Seal, Flag, and Capital City

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ARTICLE 94

The seal of the People's Republic of Albania depicts a field

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

CHAPTER XI

BAJRAKTARS

It is an Albanian tradition that when the Turks began to raise Albanian levies for their army they chose specially brave tribesmen to lead the levies and called them by the Turkish name of *deli*, meaning 'madman' or 'desperado'. At a later date they called them *spahis* (cavalrymen), and at a still later date *bajraktars* (standard-bearers), from the Turk *bajrak*, standard. So the word bajraktar conveys the business of the man so-called, and the origin of his title. He was the military leader of his tribe and owed his appointment to the Turks, not to his fellow-Albanians.

Neither delis nor spahis seem to have been blood ancestors of the bajraktars. Each tribe knows how its first bajraktar won his flag but never says that he was either a deli or a spahi. In the folk-tales which purport to recount their deeds, the spahis figure not as heroes but as ordinary cavalrymen of the type we still find in Algeria. Certain families, notably in Lumë and Yugoslav Losovë, are surnamed Spahi. These claim descent not from medieval bravos but from relatively modern cavalrymen, and they are not bajraktars. The memory of the delis and their deeds survives only in folk-tales and an occasional personal name. The bajraktar of Hot at the beginning of the century was Deli Metë Çuni. In the folk-tales the delis, more fortunate than the spahis, preserve their reputation as doughty fighters.

Tribal traditions agree that most *bajraks* were bestowed on the original holder like a Victoria Cross, for valour in battle. The combats were generally against the Serbs and Montenegrins, natural enemies of the Albanians as they were their nearest neighbours, and had not ceased ever since they appeared in the Balkans to steal ancient Albanian territory. Some bajraks are said to have been gained hundreds of years ago, and others only a few generations since. The historical details in the traditions are generally meagre and the chronology vague, but these defects make on the whole for greater credibility, assuring us that no lively imagination has been at work. To minds running as Albanian

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

703 minds do on courage as the highest of virtues, the traditions are a great inspiration.[1]

721 703 The following traditions are samples. The bajrak of Hot was won four hundred years ago by an ancestor of Deli Metë Çuni who distinguished himself by cutting off Montenegrin heads, a pastime in which the family has ever since indulged with gusto. Sul Alija, the great-grandfather of Adem Bajrami, who lived four generations ago, was made bajraktar of Krasniqe in reward for the bravery he displayed during a war between Turkey and Montenegro. Sefer Ahmeti was given his bajrak at Moraç near Belgrade after a battle against the Serbs. The first bajraktar of Nikaj also won his standard at Moraç, possibly in the same battle. Kolë Voci, who lived six generations ago, became the first bajraktar of Shalë-Gimaj in consequence of killing a Serbian bajraktar and carrying his head and standard to the officer commanding the Turkish forces. In the same battle the bajraktar of Plan was killed, but Voci caught up and saved his bajrak from capture by the enemy. Avdi Kola, a later bajraktar of Gimaj, was proud to boast that since Voci won the flag no male of his house had died in his bed.

● 701 Certain tribes had more than one bajraktar, some as many as five. Where there were two or more bajraktars the senior took precedence over the junior. If a senior bajraktar was killed in battle it was the junior's duty to take his flag.

The office of the tribal bajraktar was hereditary, going from father to son. If a bajraktar died without leaving a son he was succeeded by his brother, his brother's son, or in default of these, a cousin in the male line. If he was too old or too ill before his death to act, these relatives deputised for him. If the natural heir was a minor at his father's death, his father's brother or nephew took office until he came of full age and powers when twenty, twenty-five, or even thirty years of age, the date varying according to his capabilities. In 1933 Kolë Ndue was senior bajraktar of [the standard, the holder of which was the military leader of his tribe -- Analyst]

[1] The bajrak was not, however, always granted for military valour but was sometimes conferred for less martial reasons. For instance, Pec Peci of Pecnikaj, Shalë, was summoned to the presence of the head of the Begolli family to explain why he, a peasant, had seven wives, while the great Begolli contented himself with only three. Pec's explanation, that only one of the women was really his wife and the others servants who looked after his land and flocks as menservants might have done, though known to be untrue, so fascinated Begolli by its astuteness that he forthwith made Pec bajraktar not only of Shalë, but also of all Dukagjin.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

Shalë but only as trustee for the small son of Lush Prela, his predecessor, killed some years before. 701

Succession from father to son depended on merit, and was determined in the lifetime of the reigning bajraktar. A son who was obviously unfit was passed over in favour of his younger brother. Both, if unfit, might be superseded by their paternal uncle or cousin in the male line.

If the natural precedence between brothers was once lost, the bajrak generally passed from the elder's heirs for good. Only when the son of a dispossessed elder brother turned out much more competent than the other heirs of his generation could he regain the glory which his father's weakness had lost. For example, Muharrem Bajraktar, the standard-bearer of Ujmishtë, Lumë, was the son of Nezir Bajraktar, a younger son. His cousin, Liman, son of the elder brother to whom Nezir was preferred, was almost as capable as he was but had no right to compete with him for the succession.

For grave cause the claims of heredity were sometimes disregarded. If a bajraktar's family produced no competent male for several generations, another family might wrest the standard from its feeble hands. The transfer had naturally to be approved by the tribe. Muharrem Bajraktar of Ujmishtë, Lumë, descended not from the original bajraktar who lived at Shkavec, Lumë, but from the family which superseded the feckless descendants of the original man some generations ago. The first bajraktar of Nikç was Gilë Prëntashi, but eventually the family degenerated to such an extent that the bajrak was taken over by Turk Vuksani, a very distant cousin who lived in the same quarter as the natural heir. A more remarkable transfer took place early in this century in Perlat. For three generations there had not been a good male in the family of its bajraktar. Then Prenk Pasha, consulted as the head of the Gjomarkaj family of Mirditë and therefore the source of all wisdom, advised Perlat to desert its inadequate leader for his sister's son, the bajraktar of the neighbouring tribe of Rrshen. Perlat took the advice and followed this man and after him his son Zef Bardhoku, thus going right outside the tribe in the quest for a better leader.

With the exception of the bajraktar of Lumë, all bajraktars hitherto discussed were military leaders of tribes which were wholly or predominantly Catholic. Mirditë, Bogë, Vukël, Shalë, Nikaj, 701 745

*[the tribe military leader -- Analyst]

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701 795 Mertur and some others were wholly Catholic. Nikç, Selcë, Hot, Kthellë and Lurë were more or less mixed Catholic and Mohammedan. Certain tribes such as Has, Bytyç and Krasniq are at the time of writing completely Mohammedan but were partly Catholic until three or four generations ago, as their genealogies testify. Lumë asserts that it has been completely Mohammedan since the coming of the Turks five centuries ago. It was also not fully tribal, since each bajraktar's following consisted not of a single kin or agglomeration of kins with the same ancestors, but of a number of little kins of varying ancestry.

701 There were also bajraktars in certain non-tribal areas, such as Shpat and Martanesh in central Albania. Here the dignity was not hereditary and localized, but moved with successive holders from family to family, from quarter to quarter or even from village to village. Fitness for military leadership of the local levies was always demanded, and that quality did not necessarily remain from one generation to another, in the same family, quarter or village. Hysejn Zavolina of the village of Shelcan was a famous bajraktar in Shpat in the last years of Turkish rule, but it was at Fushë e Kuqe in the more central village of Gjinar that he set up his standard. Hysejn Ramaj became bajraktar of Martanesh because he was as popular as he was competent. After having carried his standard to victory in Montenegro he 'got religion' and turned dervish. As Baba Hysejn (Abbot Hysejn) he presided first over the Bektashi monastery (tege) at Krujë and then over that at Martanesh and was buried in the monastery of Zerqan. When he took to the cloister the bajrak passed to Murat Xhabolli, who was from the Gjoni quarter and quite a different family. The great lawgiver, Mus Ballgjini, of the village of Gurakuq was bajraktar of the district of Çermenikë when Turkish rule over Albania ended, but his son did not inherit the office. When Albania developed a conscript army of European type, there could be no more bajraktars in central Albania. Officers led the conscripts, and there was no hereditary principle to preserve the ancient title as there was among the tribes of the north.

701 619 In certain areas of the north there were no bajraktars[1] Since beys were feudal lords of the soil it fell to them to lead their henchmen in war. So wherever there were beys of any importance there were no bajraktars. Mat was the classic instance. There were bajraktars to the north of it in tribal Kthellë and Lurë; there were

[1] [the local military leader --Analyst]

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bajraktars to the south of it in non-tribal Martanesh; but there was none within its own boundaries. There factions, not tribes, were the social units, and all power, military and otherwise, was concentrated in the hands of four powerful bey families.

From first to last the primary function of a bajraktar was military. When one learned that war was imminent and troops were required, he had immediately to inform the tribe in the first instance by firing eight shots in quick succession into the air, and in the second by sending out the official runner called *kasnec* with news and a statement of how many men were wanted. One from each house was the usual number. The muster was soon complete, for it was thought shameful to hang back or to hide at home and no time was wasted hunting for deserters. When all had gathered, the march began. Two tribesmen in some cases, and in others four, led off singing. Next came a man closely connected with the bajraktar, preferably his eldest son, carrying the flag. The rank and file followed, firing constantly into the air to show their joy at the call to arms. Any sign of depression at leaving their homes would have been thought disgraceful and unmanly. The best warriors among them had the bajraktar in their midst and would guard him and the flag with their lives till they all came marching home again. No equipment was issued to bajraktars or 'soldiers'; each brought his own rifle and pistols and came in his ordinary clothes. Nor was any military training given them. Their value as soldiers depended upon the rifle practice which they had had at home. It was usually sufficient to make them all good shots. After a few months the war ended and they came home again, still in their peasant clothes and again firing into the air for joy.

In time of peace the bajraktar performed civilian duties. One of the chief was caring for the poor. If they got into trouble or needed work he intervened with the authorities. If they were benighted he gave them free board and lodging. On high occasions he sent them a ram on which to feast. So that they could buy on credit what they needed for their weddings and funerals he went guarantee for them at the village shops; perhaps he even paid for the goods when the following harvest failed and left them unable themselves to clear the debt. At times he lent them money without interest. In return he asked only that if required they would put their rifles at his disposal, joining him in attacking an enemy, spending some weeks annually in his house as unpaid or poorly paid guards,

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escorting him to town, guarding him during his stay there and escorting him home again. If they refused without justifiable cause to give him such service, he withdrew his support from them at least for a time.

The bajraktar[1] was also much occupied with local administration. Here he was assisted by one or more headmen, hereditary officials like himself. Independently or together, he and they checked quarrelling, judged and formulated new laws. He was admittedly their superior, and when their views diverged his prevailed. If pressure of work made him think an increase in their number desirable, he had power to make extra appointments provided only that he first submitted the names of his nominees to the Turkish government for approval. In short, he was the acknowledged head of the local administration.

As supreme administrative head the bajraktar had power to summon a general meeting for administrative as well as military purposes. If the matter at issue was important and affected the whole tribe, he sent the *kasnec* (tribal messenger) to command the presence of one man per house. If narrower issues were involved he summoned only one or more headmen and the local *gjobtarë* (fine-collectors) or other elders. Plenary meetings dealt with anti-social acts grave enough to involve the death penalty or expulsion, judged cases of sacrilege against the church, tightened up tribal discipline by enacting new or re-enacting old laws, decided whether to revolt or not against the Turkish government, and heard important messages from the government. In 1908 a plenary meeting[1] was held by each tribe to decide whether or not it should accept the Young Turk Constitution. Smaller meetings handled business where fines were sufficient punishment for transgression. Notably they regulated grazing rights, fixing the day for a general move to summer pastures, stipulating how many animals each family might feed on a common. They also regulated wood-cutting rights and controlled the supply of water for irrigation. The bajraktar presided at all such meetings, took an active part in the deliberations, and signed or set his seal on any minutes that were kept. He and the elders, as being socially superior, sat apart from the commoners. In the Malësi e Madhe he sat on the ground while the tribesmen stood respectfully on their feet.

[1] See M. E. Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws and Customs of the Balkans*, p. 74.

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popularly believed in Shkrel that the three sons of Vatë Marashi, the bajraktar, and the three daughters of the Voivode Preng Mirashi, had turned out badly because the deeds of Vatë and Preng had been evil.

In time of war a bajraktar from the north-west group received triple pay and triple rations. A bajraktar of Shalë received double pay and double rations, one portion as a person and the other as standard-bearer. He also received pay and rations for three servants, two of whom followed him to the war both to guard and to serve him, while the third, a specially trusted man, remained behind in his house in Shalë as guardian of his property, women-folk and children. The allowances for these servants were only what ordinary soldiers received, food and *katik* (pocket-money: in Turkish, any relish eaten with bread) at the rate of one grosh per day, which was barely sufficient for their tobacco.

As an administrator a bajraktar was unpaid in so far as he had no fixed salary. He earned something, however, by his judgements, for which he was paid at the same rate as an elder. In the Malësi e Madhe, as often as he appointed elders, he too received a fee, although they did all the work and he did not stir from home. If they could not agree on a verdict, the litigants appealed to him. He then received a double fee, one the same as the elders' and the other in respect of his own journey to the scene of the quarrel. In other tribes or groups of tribes he did not get off so lightly; he had always to judge the case himself before he received any payment. The fees varied with the importance of the case and the rapacity of the bajraktar. In the tribal, but not in the non-tribal, areas any fines imposed were divided between the bajraktar and the headmen or 'good families' of his tribe. In the Malësi e Madhe a bajraktar who was summoned to Shkodër received ten grosh (50 koronë) per day from the Turkish government for his expenses. But everywhere a bajraktar's best source of income was bribes.

The bajraktar was both the military and administrative head of his tribe. His military and administrative precedence came 'from the staff in his hand', the flag stick of Turkish donation, but descent was the test for social precedence, and priority of descent was not always his. In many tribes there were 'good families' who descended from an older brother or a social superior of his ancestor, and on that account had, generation after generation, taken social precedence of his family.

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554 Modern civilization with its army and dense array of gendarmes
[701] and officials swept away the military and administrative functions of the bajraktar, but his social position remained untouched. So in Krasniqë, Sali Mena, the bajraktar in 1939, had the precedence because he descended from the eldest son of Gjô Vata of the village of Bunjaj; but Hakik Meta, the bajraktar of Lurë, remained inferior to Doçi, Nezhë and Vlad families in that tribe because their ancestors were from better families than his.

576 Social precedence was marked in several characteristically
554 Albanian ways. For instance, if the bajraktar of Perlat in Kthellë met a Simonaj and a Gjet-Kolaj at a feast, his seat would be third from the corner and his portion of meat only the leg. The Simonaj would sit in the corner and get the head and the Gjet-Kolaj would sit next to him and get the shoulder. Even in wartime a bajraktar was kept in his civilian place except during the actual fighting. On the way to and from the battlefield he sat in the seat and ate the portion of meat that appertained to him by descent. In 1935 Lurë was mustered to check a revolt at Fier in central Albania. The bajraktar's men carried the flag out of Lurë into Mat, and by arrangement met Zef Doçi's men at Burrel in Mat. There, though both were on a warlike errand, Zef Doçi sat in the chief seat and the bajraktar and his flag in the fourth. The revolt was suppressed before the tribesmen advanced beyond Burrel. If they had gone on, rifles would have cracked at Fier before Zef Doçi had to yield
[619] the first place to the bajraktar. If one of the bajraktars of Kthellë found it necessary to discuss something with one of the six 'good families', he could not ask its head to come and see him as he would an ordinary tribesman. Instead, he must gird up his own loins and go and see the other. If they disagreed during the discussion, he could not persist in his own view but had to fall in with the other's. Trivial though this insistence on correct precedence and its manifestations may seem, it had its value in maintaining tribal discipline. Slackening of the social framework in communities so backward as these tribesmen would only have ended in anarchy.

The 'first families' excepted, the bajraktar was unquestioned first among the tribesmen, this being signified in the usual manner of corner seat and choicest portion of meat. Any male of his family old enough to walk enjoyed the same precedence and was, by the courteous and diplomatic, addressed as 'bajraktar'.

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Llesh ambushed the brigands and wounded one. As one of his men was killed, the two sides were 'one and one', equalized, and could have made peace. But the opportunity was too good for the bajraktar to miss. By the law of the mountains Llesh should not have attacked the sheepfold until he had asked the bajraktar to withdraw his protection from the brigands and had met with a refusal. So the bajraktar vowed he would not make peace but would have Doçi's blood for the 'injury'. Soon he learned that Zef Doçi and all his male relatives were at a wedding in a poor man's house. Under cover of darkness his followers crept up to the house and shooting through the windows killed two and wounded four of the wedding guests. A year later the bajraktar managed to have a third man from Zef's family killed, leaving Zef almost alone.

In his charities this bajraktar of Lurë took no account of the recipient's religion, helping a Catholic as readily as one of his fellow Mohammedans. If he discriminated between the two he would gain nothing from the Albanian government, which ignored religious differences. In Turkish times discrimination in favour of Mohammedans would have furthered his designs by winning approval from the Turkish government. He found, however, that the proved loyalty of his family to King Zog's stood him in even better stead. A marriage had also proved a useful asset. Metë Hoti, the best shot in Lurë, would have been expected to join Zef Doçi, because his mortal enemy, Dalip Kaci, followed Zef's enemy, the bajraktar. Unfortunately for Zef, Metë had a sister married to one of the bajraktar's household. Since joining Zef meant shooting at the bajraktar's men, Metë feared to have the blood of his nephews on his hands and continued reluctantly, side by side with his mortal enemy, to follow the bajraktar.

The result of the struggle can be shown by the numbers of the levies raised by the three captains for the Albanian government in 1926, 1933 and 1935 respectively. They were as follows:

	1926	1933	1935
Zef Doçi	150	50	23
Ibrahim Gjoçi	300	40	32
Bajraktar	4	300	400

It would have been interesting to revisit Lurë to see the effect on the position established by the Italian occupation. The bajraktar,

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as King Zog's man and therefore anathema to the Italians, must have lost much ground. Zef Doçi as his enemy and as a good Catholic may have regained some.

According to Albanian tradition there were no bajraktars before the Turks came, and headmen were literally the head men of their tribe. This would seem to be confirmed by a document dated 1403 which cited Alexius Kastrati, as headman of the tribe of that name, in a list of Albanian chiefs who were rewarded by the Venetians with gifts of cloth. Albanian tradition further alleges that the Turks aimed deliberately at weakening Albanian chieftains. So, on the one hand, Sultan Mahmut destroyed thirty-six kins, root and branch, and his son Mexhi a further number. On the other hand, Sultan after Sultan appointed bajraktars, ostensibly as military leaders but really as pillars of Turkish rule. By recognizing their nominees as administrative heads as well as military leaders they reduced the old headmen to a subordinate position, and thereby lessened their chances of engineering a successful revolt. This policy would explain why some bajraktars were social as well as administrative and military leaders, and others were not. The former presumably descended from headmen who were complaisant enough to accept Turkish rule, and the latter from strong men of lower position in tribes where the headmen were recalcitrant. The Turks must have trusted that pleasure in their official rank, and the increased possibilities of money-making would keep the bajraktars quiet in their turn. Recognizing the hereditary character of the bajraktar was another shrewd step on their part. As the non-hereditary delis and spahis aged or died, a hiatus unfavourable to their rule might arise. When it was a case of 'the bajraktar is old or dead, long live the bajraktar', they never lacked an agent. When King Zog, as Minister Ahmed Zogu, began to unify Albania he saw the danger from the numerous bajraktars. Accustomed to lead their tribes to war, unaccustomed to any restraint by a central authority, ignorant and untravelled for the most part and generally of autocratic temper, all of them might not have been willing to submit to the new government in Tirana. Methods of bringing them into line with or without their own wish had, therefore, to be devised. If one was willing to serve loyally, the government treated him as the Turks had long before treated a pliant headman. It made him an officer in the reserve, the modern equivalent of the ancient bajraktar, gave him the half-pay of his rank, and provided

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for his sons and nephews, granting them state scholarships on which to complete their education or military training abroad, and finding them employment as officials or officers when they came home. The most notable example of this 'pliant headman' type of bajraktar was Hakik Meta of Lurë, who was himself a captain and had several relatives who were officers in the Albanian army. If a bajraktar was likely to be recalcitrant, King Zog's government tried two methods. The first was a duplication of the system applied to the pliant headman type with reserve rank, half-pay and provision for relatives all included. Thus Gjon Markagjoni, the Hereditary Captain of Mirditë, who rebelled openly in 1921 against the central government, was rewarded for his subsequent submission by being made a lieutenant-colonel in the reserve. Cen Elezi of Dibër, whose father was killed in battle against King Zog's men in 1924, was later made a major. But fewer of the relatives of such men were educated at state expense, and the education given to those few was not so advanced—it seems to have been dangerous to put too much knowledge into their heads. And when they were ready for office they were kept in outlying unimportant districts, 'safe' areas.

The second and far more important method employed by King Zog with possible recalcitrants was the Turks' very own. The usual favours of rank in the reserve, half-pay and the provision for dependants were bestowed on a number of tribesmen who had given proof in the past of their loyalty to the régime and were 'strong' enough in the military sense to combat the influence of the obstinate bajraktars. Captain Mark Miri of Gurrëzë, who was a counterpoise to the Gjetë Coku family of Breg i Matit as well as to the bajraktar, was one example of this type. So was Major Miftar Selmani of Lumë, who was supposed to balance his fellow-villager, Muharrem Bajraktar. The transfer of the administrative powers of the bajraktars to state officials completed their weakening. The unity and stability which characterized King Zog's Albania to an extent surprising in a Balkan country were the best commentary on the policy.